



# Minuteman UPDATE

April 2003

Massachusetts National  
Guard monthly  
newsletter for members,  
families, and friends

## Governor extends benefits to activated state employees

By Shawn Feddeman, Governor's Office

Recognizing the sacrifice 144 Executive Branch employees and their families have made to serve our nation in the Iraq War, Governor Mitt Romney today

filed legislation to help these individuals meet their financial obligations while they are on active military duty.

Gov. Mitt Romney



"I support our troops overseas and recognize that families across Massachusetts are making sacrifices by having their loved ones away at war,"

Romney said. "We don't want them to also worry about paying their bills. This extra help will ease that burden for state employees."

Romney said his plan will provide state employees on unpaid military leave up to \$1,000 a month to make up for at least a portion of their lost pay. He noted that the average annual salary for enlisted military is \$35,381 and the average state salary is \$51,345, leaving a gap of more than \$15,000.

Romney also said state employees on military leave will not lose any seniority, vacation, sick or personal leave or earned overtime.

Photo by Master Sgt. Tom Allocco, 439th Airlift Wing PAO



Sgt. First Class Trevor George inspects rows of the 1166<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company's trucks staged at Westover Air Force Base. The Air Force's 439<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing airlifted 25 of the units trucks to Fort Bragg.

## Guard gets a lift from Air Force

By Staff Sgt. Andrew Biscoe, 439<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing PAO

The Air Force's 439<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing helped the Mass. Guard's 1166<sup>th</sup> Transportation Co. deploy to Fort Bragg, saving the Guard about \$50,000.

The 439<sup>th</sup>, dubbed the Patriot Wing, is in the business of filling C-5 Galaxy cargo aircraft with large heavy equipment. So when the Guard truck company needed to get its vehicles to Bragg, the wing's aerial porters thought "We'll give them a hand."

Members of the wing's 42<sup>nd</sup> Aerial Port Squadron loaded 25 of the 1166<sup>th</sup>'s trucks onto three C-5s. The C-5s were

scheduled to fly down to Pope Air Force Base, next to Bragg, without cargo. Chief Master Sgt. Bruce Westcott, the 42<sup>nd</sup> APS operations superintendent, learned of the three aircraft and the deploying Guard unit and put the two together.

While the truck company had some 50 additional trucks to take to Bragg by flatbed, the 25-truck airlift still saved the Guard about \$50,000, Westcott said.

The last of the three C-5s delivered its load of trucks to Pope on March 1.

### TRICARE offers online book

The TRICARE Handbook is now interactive and available on the health plan's Web site: [www.tricare.osd.mil](http://www.tricare.osd.mil).

Plan users can now search for information on TRICARE benefits either by subject search, or general search.

People can also go right to sections in the handbook using the interactive table of contents or they can print out the online version in its entirety. The online version will be updated as changes occur.

# These Sellars are buying into Guard's artillery missions

By Sgt. Jordan St. John, STARC PAO

It's not unusual these days for a parent to watch a son or daughter who is a National Guard soldier be called to active duty and sent overseas.

It is unusual when the parent is a unit commander and the deployed soldier is his son.

That's the case of Mass. Army Guard Col. Thomas Sellars, commander of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division Artillery, and his son, Staff Sgt. Jason Sellars, a member of Battery E of the 101<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery.

"Like any father, I'm concerned and proud," Col. Sellars said. "In this case, I know the training my son has had and know that he is prepared and qualified for this important mission. I also know there will be someone to keep a watch over him because my brother, Chief Warrant Officer Michael Sellars, the section chief for Battery E, is also going on the mission."

Chief Warrant Officer Sellars says it is an especially proud time for him to be serving in the Guard with his nephew, as they prepare for a history-making mission.

The young Sellars and his uncle are part of an eight-man Target Acquisition Battery (TAB) team recently activated and heading for duty with US Central Command.

The team is replacing another Battery E target acquisition element that has been in the theater of operations for almost six months.

"Our first soldiers took over the mission from an active duty unit and the leadership of the 18<sup>th</sup> Airborne



Photo by Sgt. Jordan St. John, STARC PAO

Col. Thomas Sellars, commander of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division Artillery, points at his brother, Chief Warrant Officer Michael Sellars, as the colonel's son, Staff Sgt. Jason Sellars, looks on. Chief Warrant Officer Sellars and Staff Sgt. Sellars have both been deployed with the Battery E, 101<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery.

Corps were so impressed with the unit's level of professionalism that they asked us here at the 42<sup>nd</sup> to continue the mission," explained Col. Sellars.

"That's a tribute to the professionalism of the soldiers of this division and the Massachusetts Army National Guard."

Battery E members said their quiet goodbyes to family and friends just a few days before the deployment.

Sellars said the soldiers are going into the mission with a bit of an

advantage since they will be taking over the important target acquisition radar mission from fellow members of their own unit.

"As a commander, I always pay close attention to the units performance and how the soldiers are doing," he said.

This time, with both a son and brother involved, Col. Sellars says that he will be pay especially close attention to this mission.



## Cost of SGLI premiums reduced

The Department of Veterans Affairs will reduce Service members' Group Life Insurance premiums beginning in July.

The new monthly rate will be 6.5 cents for every \$1,000 of coverage, about 19 percent less than the current 8 cents.

Monthly premiums for the maximum coverage of \$250,000 will fall to \$16.25 from \$20.

In addition to the basic SGLI, family

coverage is available for spouses and children of service members holding SGLI policies.

Spouses pay age-based premiums for up to \$100,000 coverage, while children receive \$10,000 of free coverage.

For more information about Veterans Administration administered life insurance programs visit: [www.insurance.va.gov](http://www.insurance.va.gov).

# Kennedy on the Cape

U.S. Sen. Ted Kennedy and U.S. Rep. William Delahunt met this past weekend with about 1,000 Air and Army National Guardsmen at Otis Air Base in the Massachusetts Military Reservation. The two politicians also met with the families of soldiers and airmen who have been deployed.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Ruben Hernandez, 102nd Fighter Wing PAO



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## TRICARE offers benefits to National Guard members

Those Guard members who were demobilized from federal duty and their dependents are eligible for the TRICARE transitional health care demonstration project.

Family members of state guardsmen ordered to active duty for more than 30 days under Titles 10 or 32 of the US Code are eligible for TRICARE.

Members of the reserves and National Guard called to active duty will be eligible for health care benefits under TRICARE, just as other active-duty service members are.

Their families will also become eligible for TRICARE benefits if the military sponsor's active-duty orders are for a long-enough period of time.

Families of members called to active duty in response to the Sep 11, 2001, terrorist attacks are eligible for enhanced benefits under the TRICARE Reserve Family Demonstration Project.

TRICARE eligibility for the military sponsor begins on the effective date of their orders to active duty. Needed care will be provided by uniformed services medical treatment facilities, and by authorized civilian health care providers.

Families of activated reservists and National Guard members become eligible for health care benefits under TRICARE Standard or TRICARE Extra on the first day of the military sponsor's active duty, if his or her orders are for a period of more than 30 consecutive days of active duty, or if the orders are for an indefinite period.

For active-duty families, TRICARE Standard pays 80 percent of the TRICARE allowable charge for covered health care services that are obtained from authorized, non-network, civilian health care providers. Those who receive the care are legally responsible for the other 20 percent of the allowable charge, plus other charges billed by 'non-participating' providers, up to the legal limit of 15 percent above the allowable charge.

Providers who 'participate' in TRICARE accept the TRICARE allowable charge as the full fee for the care they provide.

Persons who use TRICARE Standard or Extra pay annual deductibles for outpatient care of \$150 for one person, and \$300 for a family (for active-duty military sponsors who are E-4 and below, the amounts are \$50 for one person, and \$100 for a family).

Families of reserve/National Guard members who are called to active duty for 179 days or more may enroll in TRICARE Prime or may be eligible for TRICARE Prime Remote. For more information:

Log-on to the TRICARE Web site [www.tricare.osd.mil](http://www.tricare.osd.mil)

Or write to TRICARE Management Activity, 16401 E. Centretch Pkwy., Aurora, CO 80011-9043.